

viduals in a unique celebration of a dynamic heritage. Renewing hope and restoring faith, Kwanzaa uplifts the human spirit, helping us to revitalize the bonds of family and the spirit of community.

As millions of my fellow Americans commemorate Kwanzaa, I am delighted to send best wishes for a wonderful festival and a very happy new year.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 22.

Exchange With Reporters on Arrival at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia

December 22, 1995

The President. Good morning.

Q. Mr. President, do you hope to go to Bosnia in the next month or so?

The President. I want to go when the Secretary of Defense and General Shalikashvili tell me it's an appropriate thing to do. I don't want to interrupt the deployment in any way. You know, we've had a few weather delays, but I'm here to get a briefing on the deployment and what's going on and how we're doing. I've got a few questions I want to ask. If it were solely up to me, I would go tomorrow, literally tomorrow. But I think it's very important that I not do anything which interrupts the deployment. I can go as soon as it's consistent with the military mission, and I will do that.

Q. What have you heard so far, even before this briefing, on how the operation is going in Bosnia?

The President. I think our people are doing a very good job. I think the others in IFOR are doing a good job, and I think the people there, so far, are receiving them well. But I've got some specific questions, and that's why I want this briefing.

Q. Do you think Senator Dole should go if you can't go?

The President. I think that all of us should consult with the military leaders and do what is consistent with the interest of our troops and the mission.

Q. In other words, no.

Q. Mr. President, do you worry about casualties?

The President. Every day I worry about that, but I think they're showing their training and their discipline and the integrity of the plan in the way that they are working to minimize casualties and maximize the effectiveness of the mission.

Q. Do you think the American people understand that, understand the risks that are involved?

The President. Yes.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:25 a.m.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

December 22, 1995

Federal Budget Negotiations

The President. I hope—as you see, we're running a little behind today, so I hope you'll forgive us if we don't do a lot of questions; we have a lot of work to do. But let me just say from my point of view, I am pleased that our representatives met yesterday. They did make some progress. Obviously, a lot of the biggest issues remain. But the process seems to be working and I'm encouraged, and I want to continue to do it until we reach agreement on a balanced budget. That's what I think clearly we all want.

I would say here that 2 days before Christmas I hope some way can be found to get the checks for the 3½ million veterans and the aid to the 8 million children who need it just to exist. And there are almost half a million Federal workers who have been working who won't get their paychecks today that they would otherwise get. So I think those problems need to be addressed.

But on the other issue, I at least believe that we made some good progress yesterday, and I'm looking forward to the report today and continuing this process until we succeed, until we get this job done.

Q. Can we ask the leaders, Mr. President, if they will get the checks out and—

Q. Do you think the Congress should go home when millions are denied subsistence checks over Christmas?

Speaker Gingrich. Well, let me just say, if I could for a second, Mr. President, I think both the House and Senate hope to get those bills down here today so that the—the AFDC and the—as the President mentioned the other day on television.

Q. What are the chances of reopening the Government, Mr. Speaker?

Speaker Gingrich. I think we're going to talk about that now.

Q. Mr. Speaker, do you feel like a dog being wagged by its tail? [Laughter]

Speaker Gingrich. It's amazing you guys get paid for some of these questions, on the eve of Christmas. Merry Christmas.

Q. No, it's not my expression; it's the President's analysis.

The President. I never called the Speaker a dog. [Laughter]

Q. No, I know you didn't.

Speaker Gingrich. And I'm deeply grateful. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. President, do you think you can get a framework of a deal by Christmas?

The President. I'm prepared to—let me just say, I'm prepared to just keep working. I think all of us want to have Christmas with our families, but beyond that, I'm prepared to keep working. And I'm going to do everything I can to succeed, and that's what we're going to talk about.

Q. Mr. Speaker—

The President. Thank you. We really need to go to work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:52 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement With Congressional Leaders on Budget Negotiations

December 22, 1995

Today we had good meetings which built on the progress made in yesterday's discussions. Staff will prepare further analysis to clarify options for the budget advisory group, which will then advise the principals on outstanding issues. Following the meeting of the budget advisory group, the principals will meet again next Friday afternoon.

NOTE: This statement was announced jointly with Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert Dole, Senate majority leader.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 18

In the afternoon, the President had telephone conversations with Senate majority leader Bob Dole and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich on budget negotiations.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert M. Lyford to the U.S. Military Academy Board of Visitors.

December 19

In the late afternoon, the President had separate meetings with Senate majority leader Bob Dole and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, and Senate minority leader Thomas A. Daschle and House minority leader Richard A. Gephardt to discuss budget negotiations.

In the evening, the President had telephone conversations with Senators Arlen Specter and Christopher J. Dodd on securities legislation.

December 20

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Senate majority leader Bob Dole and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich on budget negotiations.

The President declared a major disaster in the State of Georgia as a result of severe storms and tornadoes on November 7 and 8.

December 21

The President announced his intention to appoint Gerard D. DiMarco to the Board of Trustees of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation.